



# Comprehensive Strategy for Lucas County Children & Families



Volume 2, Issue 4

July 2002

*Our Mission: Engaging the community in enacting the Comprehensive Strategy initiatives through education, promoting collaboration, and providing resources for planning.*

**THIS MONTH'S RISK FACTOR FOCUS: *Family Management Problems***

## Coming Through the Arts Door

*Danette Olsen, Field Consultant, Arts Council Lake Erie West*

The arts have been a powerful agent for social change for centuries. From ancient Greek plays and Kabuki theatre to Aesop's fables and Mother Goose, Cossack armies training through dance to Picasso's political commentary on canvas, or the poetry of Sappho, Rumi, and Walt Whitman to the movies of Spike Lee, Oliver Stone, and the music of Madonna - legendary is the human history of art that provokes, prepares, or produces a change. However, the arts need not be legendary to make a difference in the lives of youth and their families.

What is now considered the *community arts* movement was influenced greatly by the settlement house efforts of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In cities experiencing intense levels of immigration as well as poverty, visionaries such as Jane Addams of Chicago's Hull House, incorporated the universal language of the arts to make a better life for citizens struggling with economic, educational, and health-related issues. Today, some community arts organizations gladly enter into the realm of arts as a social force. The Arts Council Lake Erie West is one of those organizations, offering programs and services to individuals, families, and partner agencies throughout the twenty-four counties of northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan.

The arts are a particularly powerful vehicle for program delivery options and for building relationships. So often thought of as an add-on, an extra, or as fluff, youth workers who employ the arts to engage target audiences in prevention messages and to develop personal assets are discovering amazing results. Literature espousing Best Practice programming through the arts has increased exponentially throughout the last decade. Is it any wonder? The arts provide a non-threatening way to bring adults and youth together and to create dialogue over any issue imaginable.

Agencies interested in building or restoring relationships between youth and their families are wise to consider the arts as a method for success. Coming through the arts door allows for authentic and unique experiences that invite participants to interact on a playing field of discovery and often joy. Difficult issues are made less stressful when dealt with through metaphor. New memories are created when making art that can help heal old wounds. In addition, our friends in the funding realm clearly understand the power of the arts as more and more monies are coming available to help human service agencies partner with arts agencies. To learn more about YouthArts Initiatives, call or visit the websites of the Ohio Arts Council, Americans for the Arts, the Kennedy Center, and the Arts Council Lake Erie West.

**- For more information, contact Danette Olsen, Arts Council Lake Erie West, 419.531.2046, [artsclew@aol.com](mailto:artsclew@aol.com)**

### OUR VISION

***Lucas County will be a community...***

- ☐ That supports parents in caring for their children.
- ☐ Where families set their own goals and provide a loving, nurturing, supportive and safe environment.
- ☐ Where parents are the primary service specialists for their children and will provide opportunities for their growth.
- ☐ Where the community will support parents with the necessary assistance for the care and nurturing of their children.



### SPOTLIGHT

*on*

***programs addressing Family Management***

#### ***Problems:***

- Families and Schools Together (FAST) Program - page 2
- Parents Helping Parents - page 2
- Kinship Navigator - page 2
- Help Me Grow - page 3

**• Share this newsletter! Staff routings • Bulletin board postings • Agency mailings •**

## Getting FAST support:

All of us need support at certain times. That's why the Families and Schools Together (FAST) Program was created. FAST - a school-based partnership between schools, families and mental health providers - takes an early intervention/prevention approach to serving troubled youth.

FAST serves 4- to 9-year-olds who demonstrate at-risk behavior in class, as well as their families. It begins with an 8-week, after school support program and continues with monthly follow-up meetings. The core of the process is "Special Play", a 15-minute session of parent-child play therapy. Unison Behavioral Health Group operates the FAST Program, which is funded by the Lucas County Mental Health Board through the Toledo Public Schools/Healthy Students grant. Program goals include:

- Promoting the child's success at school;
- Enhancing family communication;
- Preventing alcohol and drug abuse; and
- Reducing stress for parents and students.

Families say it expands on their strengths and builds new skills in these areas:

- Family bonding;
- Family routines and customs;
- Supportive relationships;
- Positive peer groups and activities;
- Positive coping and decision skills; and
- School bonds and academic support.

Finally, the beauty of FAST is that it caters to young children before problem behaviors become too big and overwhelming for the family. The U.S. Department of Education has recognized FAST as a model program because it enhances family interactions while reducing school failure and substance abuse.

**-For more information, contact Karen Olnhausen,  
Lucas County Mental Health Board, 419.213.4600**

## Parents Helping Parents (PHP)

PHP is a non-profit organization focusing on the needs of parents by providing support groups for parents, grandparents and guardians who are troubled by the unacceptable behavior of their adolescent and/or adult children. The groups are facilitated by volunteer parents who have been through PHP support groups.

PHP offers no magic cures, but a place where parents can begin to realize they are not alone. Parents learn not to blame themselves for their children's behavior and instead learn to make creative, constructive changes through assistance from other parents. PHP supports parents by allowing children to experience the consequences of their behavior. The groups offer hope and support through sharing and suggestions. Confidentiality is stressed so that parents can feel comfortable discussing issues or problems in a safe atmosphere. They can gain valuable insight into their own situations from others in the group.

PHP provides support groups to parents who have a child in the Juvenile Justice Center's Intensive Supervision Unit or SOT programs and also provides a volunteer speaker/support group facilitator for juvenile court's Chemical Awareness Program. PHP is a partner with Toledo Public Schools, Toledo Police Department, Lucas County Juvenile Court, and Connecting Point to assist parents of children detained at the Truancy Drop-Off Center. In collaboration with the The Community Partnership's Information Sharing Network (ISN), PHP contacts parents of second-time juvenile offenders and provides community resource information to them. PHP provides a representative to the Youth Family Court Community Connection (YFC3) program, along with Lucas County Juvenile Court, Toledo Police Department, Lucas County Sheriff's Office, and the City of Toledo Youth Commission.

PHP has served the community for over twenty years and is supported by United Way of Greater Toledo and Lucas County Juvenile Court.

**-For more information, call Barbara Laraway,  
Executive Director, 419.878.7802;  
[www.parentshelpingparents.net](http://www.parentshelpingparents.net)**

## Kinship Navigator

*In Lucas County, it is estimated that at least 6,000 families have grandparents or other relatives as the primary caregivers of the children.*

When children must live with relatives, it is never a happy situation. Drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, AIDS/HIV, or school or work responsibilities are some of the main reasons birth parents are not parenting their children.

Usually everyone in these families experience worry, fear, anger and frustration. Many times the grandparents are fed up with their adult children, bewildered at what life has dealt them, and wondering what they should do.

The Kinship Navigator Program was established in Lucas County in 2001 to guide these caregiving relatives to services in the community. Community services include:

- Financial assistance, regardless of family income;
- Health care coverage for the children;
- Answers to the legal complexities;
- Information on how to manage a child's anger and behavior; and
- Support groups and enrichment programs for families.

A 56-page *Parenting Smarts* resource guide, Kinship brochures, legal definitions brochure, newsletter and other materials are available on request.

The Kinship Navigator Program is sponsored by the Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc., in collaboration with Lucas County Children Services. Funding is from the Department of Job & Family Services.

**-For more information, contact Marilee Miller or Judy  
Paschalis at Kinship Navigator, 419.382.7060,  
[jpaschalis@areaofficeonaging.com](mailto:jpaschalis@areaofficeonaging.com)**

## Help Me Grow

The *Help Me Grow* program was created to serve Ohio's expectant parents, newborns, infants, and toddlers. The program provides health and developmental services so that children start school healthy and ready to learn. Services are designed with a family's concerns and goals in mind.

In 2000, Governor Bob Taft identified a set of six commitments to child well-being. These commitments were then used to develop policy and to align program efforts and resources. The *Help Me Grow* program is an example of this. Under Governor Taft's leadership, the program has become an Ohio Family and Children First initiative implemented by the Ohio Department of Health, Bureau of Early Intervention Services.

The goal of *Help Me Grow* is to ensure that newborns, infants and toddlers living in Ohio have the best possible start in life. It is based on the Governor's first three indicators of child well-being:

- Expectant parents and newborns thrive;
- Infants and toddlers thrive; and
- Children are ready for school.

*Help Me Grow* promotes the well-being of young children through home-based specialized services and public awareness with a special emphasis on early intervention and prevention. Prenatal services and newborn home visits along with information about child development are also provided. The program helps families with young children connect with resources they need. The program also provides service coordination and ongoing specialized services to those families that are eligible. Another feature of the *Help Me Grow* program is a statewide advertising campaign to encourage prenatal and well-baby care.

Locally, the Board of County Commissioners and the Lucas County Family Council administer the *Help Me Grow* program. In Lucas County, *Help Me Grow* provides a link to community resources and services. Parents are recognized as the primary specialists in making decisions about their children and family life while also reinforcing the community's role in helping to support parents in their role as parents.

A variety of health, developmental and support services that are free and confidential are available to all Lucas County residents who are expecting a child or those with an infant or toddler under 3 years of age. *Help Me Grow* offers:

- In-home visits by registered nurses before and after the birth of a baby;
- Information on child health, growth and development;
- Parenting tips and parent-to-parent support;
- Screening for health, hearing, vision and development;
- Fun developmental activities for parents and children;
- Access to services and therapies for special needs;
- Information for parents on local and statewide workshops; and
- Resource libraries of books and videos about parenting.

**- For more information, contact the Collaborative Network, an information and referral source in Lucas County, at 419.251.1823 or 1.866.380.4263, or visit [www.odh.state.oh.us/ODHPrograms/GROW/grow1.htm](http://www.odh.state.oh.us/ODHPrograms/GROW/grow1.htm)**



### Children's Defense Fund

• [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org)

### Uncle Webster's Parenting News

• <http://sonoma.unclewebster.com/parents/news/index.shtml>

### LOCAL RISK FACTORS

#### *Favorable Parental Attitudes & Involvement in the Problem Behavior:*

##### • Indicators:

- ☐ Adult violent crime arrests
- ☐ Adult drug offense arrests

#### *Friends Who Engage in the Problem Behavior:*

##### • Indicators:

- ☐ Alcohol use in 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grades
- ☐ Marijuana use in 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grades
- ☐ Cigarette use in 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grades
- ☐ Cocaine use in 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grades
- ☐ Teen pregnancy rates

#### *Academic Failure Beginning in Elementary School:*

##### • Indicators:

- ☐ Drop-out rate
- ☐ Graduation rate
- ☐ Reading proficiency
- ☐ Math proficiency

#### *Early Initiation to Problem Behavior:*

##### • Indicators:

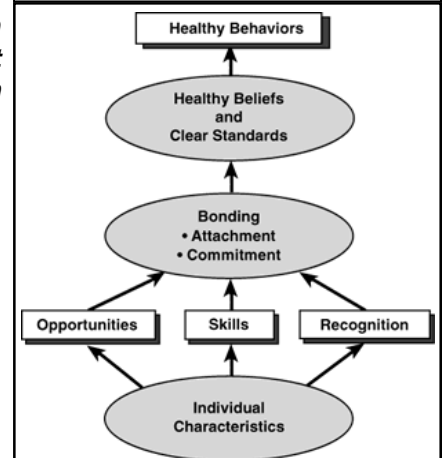
- ☐ Alcohol use in early grades
- ☐ Marijuana use in early grades
- ☐ Cigarette use in early grades
- ☐ Cocaine use in early grades

#### *Family Management Problems:*

##### • Indicators:

- ☐ Number of children in substitute care
- ☐ Incidences of substantiated child abuse or neglect

-based on local data gathered for the community report on *A Comprehensive Strategy for Lucas County Children & Families*, 1999



# The Community Partnership

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*Comprehensive Strategy for Lucas County Children & Families*

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*The Comprehensive Strategy for Lucas County Children & Families newsletter is a cooperative effort of many agencies throughout the county. For copies of the initial report or data CD, or to join the mailing list, contact The Community Partnership at 419.866.3611, 5902 Southwyck Blvd., Toledo, Ohio 43614 or e-mail [Cyndi@communityprevention.org](mailto:Cyndi@communityprevention.org). For specific Comp Strategy questions, call Kristen Kania at Lucas County Family Council, 419.213.6994, or e-mail [kkania@co.lucas.oh.us](mailto:kkania@co.lucas.oh.us)*

## OVERVIEW OF COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

Problem Behavior □ Noncriminal Misbehavior □ Delinquency □ Serious, Violent & Chronic Offending

### ***Prevention***

***Target Population: At-Risk Youth***

### ***Graduated Sanctions***

***Target Population: Delinquent Youth***

Programs for  
All Youth



Programs for Youth  
at Greatest Risk



Immediate  
Intervention



Intermediate  
Sanctions



Community  
Confinement



Training  
Schools



Aftercare

#### Youth Development Goals:

- Healthy and nurturing families
- Safe communities
- School attachment
- Prosocial peer relations
- Personal development and life skills
- Healthy lifestyle choices

#### Youth Habilitation Goals:

- Healthy family participation
- Community reintegration
- Educational success and skills development
- Healthy peer network development
- Prosocial values development
- Healthy lifestyle choices